

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #448-1

with

Manuel Nobriga (MN)

March 8, 1993

Waipahu, O`ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Manuel Nobriga on March 8, 1993, at his home in Waipahu, O`ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Nobriga, why don't we start by having you tell me when you were born and where you were born?

MN: Well, I was born in the year 1898, April 7. I was born in Funchal, Madeira—that's the island from Portugal. We lived there, [*then*] we left there from the island to come to Hawai`i. The sugar planters went around to get [*i.e., recruit*] sugar people, so we left there sometime in late (October), as close as I can remember. We arrived in Hawai`i December 1. All the time we were in the ocean.

WN: December 1, what year?

MN: Nineteen-six [*1906*].

WN: Nineteen-six, okay. Before we get to your trip to Hawai`i, tell me something about your father [*Valentin Nobriga*]. What was he before he came to Hawai`i?

MN: My father---we lived in a farm. We had a milking cow, and everything, of course, on the farm. But my dad was in the lumber business there. They had a lot of big trees and all that. Something like when we came to Hawai`i, we had a lot of *kiawe*, but that was chopped up for fuel, for people cook and all that. So that thing happened to my dad, the same thing back there. When the lumber went out, the trees went down, he went out of business. Then, they [*recruiters*] went around there to get people for the sugar work. He registered to come to Hawai`i. When we came here had four boys, three girls.

WN: What number were you?

MN: I was number—one, two, three, four—five. I was five.

WN: Now, your father was then a farmer and a lumber man?

MN: Yeah, farmer and lumber man. The lumber was on the side. And anyway, we couldn't make it there. Everything was from the farm. They went broke.

WN: What was your house like, if you remember?

MN: Well, we had a nice house, but the kitchen was separated from the house. There was no floors on the kitchen. And we go just a few feet away from the main house, that's where we used to eat, cook, and everything there, over fire, all wood fire. And the floor was so hard that you couldn't even get your feet dirty from stepping on all that, that was the floor. Then we sleep in the main house. My dad used to sleep upstairs, us kids had couple of rooms, we sleep downstairs. It was four boys in one room, my three sisters in the other room. One was born in Hawai`i, Eva. She died when she was sixteen. That was the whole family. But when we came to Hawai`i [*in 1907*], if we came on the boat, we came on a rig. Well, was actually a regular passenger—wasn't a passenger boat, was one of these general cargo boats and they made bleachers and everything in the boat. Each family had a little fence off like part in the boat. And we had three beds. There was no doors, they had curtains all alongside there.

WN: How did you feel about leaving Portugal to come to Hawai`i? Do you remember how you felt?

MN: Well, when we left there, I felt very happy, we're going somewhere. Kid, eh? I was eight-and-a-half years old then. I used to be very close to my dad. Everywhere my dad went, I was with him, see. And back home [Portugal], when he had to go out for business, my mother [*Leanora Ornellas Nobriga*] used to tell him, "Take the boy." So at my age, I was number five, I went with him everywhere, so I was very close to my dad. When I was six, seven, eight years old, my dad took me everywhere. Come on the ship [*to Hawai`i*], the same thing. Would go up on ship. We came through the Atlantic [*Ocean*]. After we crossed the Magellan Straits, we hit the Pacific Ocean. And everything was calm. Every day, when the sun about to go down, my dad would take me up on top and we watched the sun go down. But I used to think the sun used to go down right in the water, because way in the horizon, yeah? I used to tell my dad, "The sun supposed to be fire, but it's not smoking."

He said, "No, no, no. That's going to the other side of the world. It's not going into the water." But I couldn't understand that (chuckles), till I went to school, I found out what the horizon was. I couldn't read, I couldn't do all that stuff. My dad didn't know how to explain those things, you know, because he had no schooling or anything. My mother could read. She had church books, she learned [*about*] masses and all that [*from*] Catholic church books. She could read all that. She couldn't write.

WN: What were---did you go to school in . . .

MN: No, there were no schools in Madeira. There were schools for maybe—they had a special teacher that people who had money paid for their kids go there. The well

off. But you're a farmer, you better believe it, you die a farmer. Schooling, no, no, no. All they taught us was religion. You see a priest go by, you kiss his hand. They used to pass over our farm, up above on the main road go down to Funchal, to the town. We lived about five or six miles out of town. They passed up above every week, certain time. I forgot what day of the week. We kids used to get set. Those who could walk, walk up the hill, the main road above our farm, walk up there and wait for the priest. The priest pass by, we kiss his hand, he was like a god. That's what we were trained. Real strong religion, didn't hurt me at all. (Chuckles) When I came to Hawai'i, I took up the religion very serious. I always was---I was always born a Catholic.

I'd like to talk a little bit about religion. I'm a Catholic, but all this stuff you learn in the Catholic religion, when you get grown up, you start thinking for yourself. From the eighth grade in Waipahu, across the Waipahu Elementary School here is Waipahu Street. The [*St. Joseph's*] Church, the old church was built there, so I used to go catechism there. I took my communion when I was twelve years old. You could not take communion unless you were twelve. So you had to have that thing pound in your head, you do everything. Then I took my religion very serious. I took my first communion, then I became an altar boy, help the priests. In the old days, the old Roman mass was different. The priest came here with a chalice, you pour the wine, the water. The guys that like a lot of wine, you pour more wine (chuckles). So I was the wine guy. If not enough, the whole thing go in there sometimes. Lot of the priests became alcoholics, you know. (Chuckles) This is what, years afterwards, I start thinking. Anyway, I learned all that. But the confession, I couldn't understand. I could not understand confession. I couldn't understand why God knew everything, but you had to tell the priest. I was twelve years old already, see. I start to say, "What the heck? Why should I tell the priest if he already knows?"

(Laughter)

MN: And that kept on for—that got in my head for years and years. I doubted. Anyway, then I joined the Holy Name Society, I went in everything. I wanted to know everything about the worship. Years back, I went to Lahaina. I left home. I was seventeen, eighteen years old, left home. I went to Lahaina, Maui. And I joined the Sacred Heart of Jesus there. I was a Catholic, I wanted to know more. Maria Lanakila, the church, it's still there. I went to visit about six, seven years ago. The church is still there. So I went there. It's a different society and was real different from the Waipahu church. Then from there I went to Pa`ia, Maui. The church was little different. This priest was little different. I stopped going to confession. If Lord knows what I'm doing, why should I tell the guy? I figure, God knows everything, why should I tell him? That was my religion. I'm still a Catholic, but I don't believe in confession. I'm sorry, but that's the way it is. I confess direct to God, I don't need an interpreter or anything. He understands all the languages, according to what we learn in school, learn in catechism. So I stopped going to confession, but I'm a Catholic. I do everything else but no confession because God knows everything. He's the guy can forgive me, I don't need a lawyer. I don't need no help.

WN: How far away was your church from your home in Madeira?

MN: We used to walk everywhere. Didn't matter, when you were kid. I should think, come to think about it, at least close to two miles, within a mile and two miles.

WN: And how often would you go church?

MN: Every Sunday. The church in Madeira, we did not have seats. It was either stand up or kneel on the floor. No seats. I came over here [*Waipahu*], they had a seat, you can sit there. Another thing when we came here, they had children, everybody, all together. If you go fast, you get a good place, you can hear the priest more. But the priest used to go on the side of the wall, they had a little place there like a booth, that he preached to you [from], see. But when it comes down to say the sermon, he come out on the regular floor, on the altar. (Chuckles) That's the way it was. And anyway, we go to church every Sunday, if possible. My mother was very religious lady. Religion don't hurt anybody but it's good for kids to know all about it. When you're grown up, there is something---I learned plenty from religion. I know what's right and wrong. I learned that from religion. And I know what's wrong with some of it.

And when I joined the Holy Name [*Society*] here, coming back to that, we used to—the altar—we used to have an American flag on the side, and another flag there, the church. I made a stand for this church here. That's down here now, the new church. Now they don't want the American flag over there anymore. Not allowed in the altar. And we used to take communion, they had a railing. You go up there, you kneel, and the priest on the other side gave you communion across the railing. That's the way it was, communion. Today, there's so many people going to church, they appoint a guy to help him, and he give you communion. How can that guy, an ordinary guy, never went to---well, they know what they're doing, but they never went and get to be a priest, and he can give you communion. I stopped going to communion.

If every Tom, Dick, and Harry can---I used to take that as the real thing, you know, put on your tongue. But I start thinking, eh, if anybody can go just grab a hold of Jesus Christ. . . . I used to think that was real Jesus Christ. We could not swallow, just let it go melting away. When I was a kid, I almost got choked sometimes. (Chuckles)

But that's religion. But I still think, by my feeling, I'm still a Catholic. I'll never change. There is lot of thing in that religion that is the truth. What gets me today is all the trouble, and all mostly the trouble today is religion. Where is all the trouble today? God was a Jew. He was a Jew. Now, people don't like the Jews, but he was a Jew. Another thing that lot of people---you see, the prayers, the Christian prayers, you take the Catholics, they have the Hail Mary. But the Protestants don't have the Hail Mary. They don't believe there was such a thing as a virgin. You know what I mean? They don't have the Hail Mary, according to what these Protestants tell me. Catholic kids didn't---my mother didn't want me to play with them [*Protestant children*]. "Don't believe what they say now. You're a Catholic." That part was all right. But after I grew up, what the heck.

WN: Did you folks have church activities in Madeira?

MN: Yeah, they had the annual things. Every saint had a birthday. Certain saint had a birthday and then they had carnivals and stuff, make money. It wasn't peanuts, what they call, this Portuguese, they call (*tremoço*). Lupine beans. You ever ate lupine beans?

WN: No. Looping beans?

MN: They call it lupine beans, they call (*tremoço*) in Portuguese. Lupine beans, little bigger than the pork and bean, but yellow. They expensive. There's some people in town make it. They buy it, they sell it. They boil it in water and salt, and put 'em in a jar. Used to be you could get it for two or three dollars. Now you can't get 'em in for fifteen dollars. Kalihi Holy Ghost [*i.e., Our Lady of the Mount*] used to sell 'em.

WN: But in Portugal, where did you get it from?

MN: Oh, that was common. That was just like peanuts. The meat is in there, you break it, and then you throw away the skins. It's lupine beans, it's a bean. But you age it in water for a week or so, I forgot, with a little salt. Some Portuguese, they do it here yet.

WN: What did your father grow on the farm?

MN: Oh, my father grew everything on the farm. We had a pig, for house use. And potatoes, onions, everything that grew, grew on the farm. Mostly potatoes and corn, cabbage. Cabbage, all year round. But the strange thing about raising the pig, you had a pig, you had to make a hole in the ground. And Madeira, lot of rock. You wall the pig up, the pig stays down there till you go slaughter 'em. You throw your food down there, and all that. All that leftover from the farm, cabbage, all that stuff.

WN: How deep was the hole?

MN: Well, when I was a kid, much taller than me. If I fall in there, I couldn't get out from there. I had to call for somebody to take me out when I was a kid. Maybe about five feet, at least. Down in the hole, so the pig couldn't get out.

WN: You mean the pig was raised in that hole, or just when it's ready to be killed, you put 'em in there?

MN: They leave 'em in there till ready to kill 'em. Oh heck, pigs, you can grow 'em in six months. I raised pigs for my dad here [*Waipahu*], when I was a kid, before I go to school.

WN: You know when you went to town, to Funchal, the town area, how did you go there?

MN: We walked down.

WN: How often would you go?

MN: You see, when we lived there, had all downhill, all down to town from where we live. All hills. They had a sled where you can go that was built with a basket. I rode one of those when I came to Hawai'i. My dad put us all in there, and we walked down to the wharf.

WN: Oh, drawn by the horse?

MN: No, no, push. The only guy that could ride a horse was the wealthy guy. And he passed by our place, we'd go run up there to see the guy on a horse. Must have been Englishman or something. Lot of English people are---when it comes to drinking tea and all, we were tea drinkers. We never drink coffee in Madeira. We're tea drinkers. We had tea on the table all the time. In Hawai'i too, till we finally got, little by little, coffee. I used to take tea. I used to work in the plantation when I was a kid, tea. All tea till finally we got grown up and all, we start learning to drink coffee.

WN: What kind of childhood did you have in Madeira? What kind of games did you used to play as a kid?

MN: Games, I don't remember playing games. Everything we did was maybe picking apples, or harvesting the potatoes, put 'em in baskets. That was our life. You didn't have games. Who you gonna play with? They didn't have ball games. My grandfather lived—like I live here—my grandfather lived, say, way down, it was quite a—we could walk there—maybe down to, further than the Times [*i.e., the distance between Manuel Nobriga's present home and Times Super Market in Waipahu, a distance of approximately two miles*]. But was all on the hill. Everybody lives on the hill. You live on the hill, the other guy lives further up (chuckles). They call it “hilly Madeira.” Anyway, I don't remember playing anything back home. Everything we did was doing something on the farm or go downtown with my brothers, sell wood.

WN: Did you sell the produce too? The things that you grew, did you folks sell?

MN: Yeah, we used to sell. We used to grow corn and we grew wheat too. They had a wheat mill over there, all owned by the English people. You take your wheat down there, and you get it threshed out, so much a bag. You don't pay for that. They take so many bags of wheat, raw wheat, probably a dozen bags of raw wheat, you get one bag back of flour. There's no money involved, they keep. For their work, they keep all the other stuff. The fiber and all that, they do something with it. I don't remember. We never paid for that. I gave you this, you give me that.

WN: Trading, eh?

MN: Trade. That's all I could remember, I used to go and carry the wheat bags. My two oldest brothers, they did all the heavy work. One reason—I like to tell you—one

reason why we came to Hawai`i faster was, my brothers, in a year or so, would have been inducted in the army. What they did at that time, they induct you in the army, they train you so much, they send you to Angola. Angola was a Portuguese colony. It's still Portuguese over there. [*Angola was under Portuguese rule until achieving independence on November 11, 1985.*] They send 'em to Angola, get their real training there. My mother didn't want that at all, and when they came around to recruit sugar workers, oh, she grabbed it. Not so much my father, [*but*] my mother, my brothers too. And my two older brothers never did learn. They learned to read and write here, but they never did get an education. They came here and started to work. They went to night school and learned how to write their names and stuff like that, that's about all. My two older brothers couldn't read a paper very well. I read it to them.

WN: Now, when you came to Hawai`i, where did you go first, immigration station?

MN: When we came to Hawai`i, we learn where is the immigration station from the boat. We were there, I don't know, maybe a week. I don't know how long. Fumigate the clothes, everything, in those days. Make sure when you come to the plantation, you're in health to work. Well, I guess they still do it today.

WN: How did they fumigate your clothes?

MN: Well, immigration station, they treated us well, because they had interpreters, eh. Portuguese---I remember now, they must have come from Punchbowl [*O`ahu*]. They had a fence, they come and talk to us. They had Portuguese [*living in Hawai`i*] way before us. The Portuguese that came before us, they didn't have too many in the plantations. The only ones that were left in the plantations were these guys that could read and write a little. They were all *lunas*. If you could read and write a little bit and you could talk loud and scare the hell out of the guys, you come foreman. I'm telling you. That's no fooling. "Huhh," they shout at you across (chuckles). So anyway, way before I became a boss in O`ahu Sugar Company, I already had my training from school. No yell at anybody, and all that (chuckles). You talk softly, they come close by, you get more results. (Chuckles) Funny, I learned that from my dad. He was very soft-spoken. He used to hate people that shout. But we came here, all these Portuguese *lunas*, "Hey, you come here!" Oh, my dad, he used to really get all worked up over that. (Chuckles)

WN: What was the immigration station like?

MN: The immigration?

WN: Yeah. What was it like over there? Did they have bunks for you folks to sleep on?

MN: When we came on the boat? [*Manuel Nobriga is referring to conditions on the ship.*] They had bunks. They had blankets and everything. They had these blankets that you get only about—I think horse blankets, the thing come around your mouth, you know. But you shake 'em, shake 'em, shake 'em, then you. . . . They had pillows and blankets for everybody. You see, we had one apartment—I

call it apartment, room. Let's see, about two. My dad and my mother slept in the bottom one, then I had one on this side. Above was my three sisters. Then they had one on the other side for us. Four brothers. My kid brother and I slept way on the top one. Two brothers below, shelf like, you know. My father and mother, then above, three sisters. Big enough. Comfortable, only the blanket, you gotta make sure you shake it, because that stuff come out of the blanket, horse blanket I call that. Comfortable. One thing, on ship, they had no refrigeration those days. But they carried livestock, cattle, way in the back. And they used to kill one, I don't know how often, but we used to have meat twice a week. Fresh meat.

WN: On the ship?

MN: On the ship. And they used to have a gallon of wine once a week.

WN: How long were you on the ship? Do you know?

MN: Oh, we were over a month on the ship. We came all the way [*from the*] Atlantic, then up the Pacific Ocean. But all the way wasn't rough till we hit the Magellan Straits. Was rough. Yeah, was long. I slept all the way, and as I got up, the sun was coming in already. We got in there, I don't know what time we got there, but anyway I went to sleep. There was a porthole there where the boat, you go down, you see nothing but water, then up, you see the sunlight. Down again, I watched that. I watch that, I fall asleep. I used to fall asleep there, very, very fast. I just watch that. Whether it was a real calm day, or it was—you could see more or less, but when the thing was rocky, I used to like that. I didn't know what the hell we going through. Everybody prayed and everything, you know, because we go down, eh.

We were there I don't know how long. Anyway, after we pass the straits, everybody came up, all sweat and everything. All the women, wash 'em down, kids, wash 'em down, water hose, they put canvas, eh. Next guy, next guy, then the men and all. The toilet, they had a trough on the ship. Curtain and running water. You want toilet paper, brother, you better get your own, because they don't furnish toilet paper to immigrants. (Laughs) I never forgot that. Somehow when you brought up rough, you don't think about those things, you know. Somehow, you always get yourself clean. Till I was eight-and-a-half years old, I didn't know what the hell toilet paper was. (Laughs) I'm never lonesome because I watch kids and I say, "Goddammit, you kids have got it now."

But that's the times, I figure. Well, my kids, I try to give 'em all the schooling they want, but they all quit early, got married and this and that. That's what they want.

WN: I was wondering, what became of your father's farm?

MN: Oh, he lost the farm. Yeah, he owe so much money and he went bankrupt. Wasn't a very big farm, only a small farm. The farm was only to take care the family mostly. His business was outside. People used to hire, when they harvest, they used to hire our people there, when they harvest potato or wheat or something. He just pay 'em



with potatoes. But I remember they used to get forty cents a day. I never forgot that. They used to teach me Portuguese counting, count in Portuguese. When I went to school here, everything I knew was memorized. Everything was memorized. If you couldn't keep it in your mind, where you gonna look for it? You can't read, you can't find it, nowhere. So when I went to school, after I learned and all that, I say, "Boy, this is duck soup." That was a relief after I got to learn to write. What the heck, I don't know a certain word, I learned how to find the word in the dictionary and all that. But I tell you, I don't know whether I should jump, but while in school, my favorite subjects was history, geography and English—we used to call that grammar. Reading and writing and arithmetic was the thing. No such thing as math, or all the words we use today. And one teacher teach you everything. In the morning you start with reading, writing, or spelling, or composition, or history. And English was, we used to call that the English grammar.

WN: Now, did you know any English when you came?

MN: Not one word. I couldn't speak one word.

WN: So all the English you learned was at school?

MN: At school, Waipahu [*Elementary*] School. I wanted to learn English badly because the local kids here used to push us around, you know. They teach you some word that's not supposed to be spoken. All F-yous and all that, that's the first words you get to learn. You see, when I see these Filipino immigrants come here now, the local people don't treat the immigrants bad, it's the ones [*i.e., Filipino immigrants*] that are here already that push 'em. The Filipinos that have been here, and the new ones come in, they think, ah. They don't like the new Filipinos. The Portuguese were the same.

WN: So you got teased by the Portuguese?

MN: We were pushed around by the Portuguese, not by the Japanese boys. My best friends was Japanese. In fact, lot of guys, when they learning the trade and all, they even tell me, "You never learn anything from Japanese."

I tell 'em, "No, no, no. You're wrong. I got my start with Japanese machinists."

"Where?"

"In Lahaina."

Somehow the Hawaiians didn't like the Japanese. He was top machinist in Lahaina [*i.e., at Pioneer Mill Co.*]. And I got friendly with him. I start helping him, and he taught me this and that. When I went to Paia [*i.e., Maui Agricultural Co.*], same thing. The best machinist in Lahaina was a Japanese guy, his name, I forgot. And in Paia they had a Japanese machinist. He used to let me use his tools, he say, "You chop'em like this. You do like this, do like that." But the Hawaiian and them other guys, they never teach me a damn thing. They didn't have too many Portuguese

machinists. They were mostly in the mill. But I took up machinist. Then when years come by talking about machinists, I had a guy, Sadao Shinno, he went to trade school, learned to be a machinist, and he had the practice and everything. But they [*O`ahu Sugar Co. plantation management*] didn't want Japanese in the shop, machinist. Helpers, yes, but not machinists. So he applied for that. He used to ride bicycle [*competitively*] for me. He was top rider. He told me, "Eh, Nobriga, I graduate this year, how about give me a break go over there."

I said, "Go apply."

Then he went to apply. Oh, they never had Japanese here machinist, only helpers. Then I went to see the boss. And then he [*Shinno*] had a brother there that was in the office. He went to see the boss [*i.e., O`ahu Sugar Co. manager*], [*Hans P.*] L'Orange. I told L'Orange, "This Sadao Shinno went to trade school. He knows more how to figure sprocket, all the stuff, than me. How about giving him a break?"

"Oh, you're going all out for your pedal pusher?" I used to call the bicycle riders "pedal pushers."

"No. This is not pedal pusher. This guy knows his stuff. He can figure out the sprocket or the gear better than I can. He went to a trade school. I didn't. I learned the hard way. But when he comes here, he'd make a better man than me, because he got all the technology and everything."

So anyway, he [*L'Orange*] finally let him and some other guys in there. This is the truth. Finally we got one or two more after that. Then we got Filipinos in there too. I help the Filipinos too. Then at that time, I became engineer. I was moved to engineer, I had a little more pull to help guys come in. Then I got a lot of pedal pushers to become welders and everything, one by one, you know. "What is this? You going let all the bicycle riders around here?"

"They can do the work. They're not riding bicycle. They doing the work."

They all made good. Shinno made good. He made top machinist over there. When I was engineer, when I want the big work in the mill, I said, "I want Shinno."

"Oh, I can't give you Shinno."

"Well, I'll wait. Let him finish that first."

The boss over me, Charlie Cowan come around. He said, "How come, why didn't you bring a machinist here?"

"I asked [*Frank*] Crawford for Shinno, he said I gotta wait."

"No, no, no. You're not gonna wait. Frank, give him the man he wants."

That's it. After that, the shop foreman, when I go over there, "I want this guy."

"You went see Charlie Cowan again?"

"I didn't have to see Charlie Cowan, I'm seeing you!"

Because they thought I was mud in those days. You couldn't belong in the [*socia*] club and all that. But today I got daughters married to *Haoles*, they different. Not all *Haoles* are the same. One of them can spoil it for a lot of people. Not anymore.

WN: Did you have family here before you came?

MN: Nobody. I had no family here. There were Nobrigas here, but no relation.

WN: Who came to pick you up? How did your father know to go to Waipahu? Or how did you get to Waipahu?

MN: I don't know. He just got in with other guys. We had a cousin came with us, Joseph, he went to Kaua`i afterwards. He came to Waipahu. He was [*originally*] from Brazil, but then he came to Madeira. He knew about travel and he asked my dad to go with them. But when we came on the train, we got down the station here, we were supposed to get out of the train, or something, rush, rush, to shift us down `Ewa. Wrong place (chuckles). So nobody there to meet us. Then one guy came down from the mill. He met us. We stayed overnight in his place, then we came to Waipahu. Guy by the name of Freitas, I remember. I went to his place and sleep. He was a real nice man. He took all of us, nine of us—three girls, four boys, my father and my mother. We slept at his house and the next day we got on the train, came back to Waipahu. This Portuguese guy, we were surprised that he could speak Portuguese too. Pretty good.

WN: Was he local born?

MN: He was . . .

WN: Born here or born in . . .

MN: Local born.

WN: Local born.

MN: Couple of years after, he died, accident. Freitas his name, but I never forgot that.

WN: Let me turn over the tape.

WN: Okay, so when you came here, where did you live first?

MN: When we came here we lived on Waipahu Street, where Nii Store is at today. Nii Superette.

WN: Nii Superette?

MN: On Waipahu Street. We lived there. They had two old houses there, old plantation house. We lived there. I'm not quite sure how many years, but we lived there for at least two years, until they made a big camp, Spanish Camp for the Spaniards, the Spanish immigration came in. So they had one house right on the main street, since this [*first*] house, somebody had bought the land for business. They gave my dad a house on the main street, brand-new house.

WN: In Spanish Camp?

MN: In the Spanish Camp. That's why we lived in Spanish Camp. Above the road was Portuguese Camp, above Waipahu Street. Afterwards, it became Filipino Camp.

WN: So there was Spanish people living in Spanish Camp?

MN: Yeah, the whole bunch of Spanish people came in, immigration [*in the early 1900s*]. All speak Spanish. I could speak Spanish with them, with the other kids. The language almost the same [*as Portuguese*], only it's a more colorful language. When the Spanish speak, they speak kind of sing you know. We say "bie-nu," the Spanish say, "nye-nyu," you know, the language is more—well, the Portuguese of the [*European*] continent speak a little different from the Portuguese of the islands [*i.e., Azores and Madeira*]. That's the difference. Talking about the Portuguese, afterwards, some came from the continent to Waipahu, and they thought they were superior Portuguese, "You from Madeira, I'm from," they used to say in Portuguese, "*continente*, I'm from the continent. You're just from the island." So they were the real Portuguese.

WN: They were like from Lisbon?

MN: They were right from the continent, Lisbon. Outside. Maybe not from the city, maybe from outside skirts.

WN: And they lived in Portuguese Camp or Spanish Camp?

MN: When they came, the Spanish Camp was built already, they went in the Spanish Camp. A few of them.

WN: So they felt little more superior than you folks.

MN: (Chuckles) But we lived on the best house on the street, main street of Waipahu, where them days didn't have automobiles, too. They had mules, eh. They passed down early in the morning, clanking, they had all the harness and stuff would change and all, they pass in front our house. You could hear them early in the morning. Five o'clock in the morning, they take the mules up to the fields to haul the cane and all. You could hear the chains, clink, clink, clink, clink, clink. You know, you could hear the sound. I never forgot that clink, clink, clink. And in the afternoon, around four or five o'clock they come home, I used to be in the yard. You

could hear, oh, the mules going by, *pau hana*. Oh, that chain, *kuru-kuru-kuru*, that mule's running back, I'm telling you. I never forgot when I was a kid. I used to tell my dad, "You know, those mules they know more than a lot of people."

He said, "Yeah, yeah. They know more. Those mules, they're smarter than people." He used to tell me. "They know what is hard and they know what is easy."

(Laughter)

WN: Did the Spanish and the Portuguese get along?

MN: Oh yeah. No problem. The Spanish and Portuguese, they were really good friends. In fact, I almost—I had a Spanish girlfriend. I used to take her for like my sweetheart. I was a kid, see, sixteen, seventeen. Afterwards, this guy, Alphonso Guerrero, he married her. In fact, I got him to go with her. He used to hang around, real good friends, hang around with me. She used to come there talk to us. She kind of used to talk more to me than to him. Mama used to say, "I want you to marry a Portuguese girl. Don't marry the Spanish people. But it's up to you." She never forced.

So "Okay." I kept away. He married her afterwards.

WN: And he's Portuguese.

MN: No, he's Spanish.

WN: Oh, he's Spanish.

MN: He was from Gibraltar.

WN: And where was she from?

MN: She was from someplace in Spain. You see, he used to be in Spain, he go across to Gibraltar, he worked for the English and come back. He could speak a few words in English. Anyway, this Alphonso, afterwards see, he learned, he came in the [*machine*] shop, and I helped him out. We were good friends. His boy became one of my [*Boy*] Scout boys, Henry Guerrero. He married one of my nieces. But this Guerrero died in the Mainland.

WN: You were telling me that lot of the local-born Portuguese used to sort of tease the immigrant Portuguese? Did that happen in Spanish Camp too?

MN: No, the Spaniards didn't stay here long enough to raise their kids to be. . . . I don't think the Spanish stayed in the plantation more than five or six years. As soon as they had enough money, bang, go to the Mainland. By the time they were going to the Mainland, the Portuguese would be going already, way before them. I think was two or three families left in Waipahu, from all the immigrants of my time.

WN: Spanish you mean? The Spanish?

MN: I mean Portuguese . . .

WN: Portuguese?

MN: . . . and Spanish.

WN: So while you were here, you remember Spanish and Portuguese families leaving for the Mainland.

MN: Yeah. I stayed here---well, I just left Waipahu to go to Maui [*in 1917*] for about two years, or something like that.

WN: Yeah. Right.

MN: And then, when I came [*back to O`ahu*] from Maui, I wanted to work outside the sugar. I went and worked outside. I got a job—this guy used to be in Pa`ia. I met him Downtown [*Honolulu*], Capellas. “Eh, I no see you around.” I pass by his place, “I no see you around.”

“Where you came from?”

He used to ride a motorcycle, you know. And, “Oh, I came from Pa`ia looking for a job.”

“Eh, come here, come here.”

He took me down the shop. This was his lunchtime, I think. He got me a job over there. I worked over there little over a year, outside, machinist. The best thing ever happened to me. I learned a lot of close work, automobile work. I spent about a year outside of sugar industry, in that Pacific Auto and Machine Shop [*in Honolulu*], across the Kawaiaha`o Church, used to have a shop there. And I learned a lot over there. Then I came to O`ahu Sugar Company [*in 1921*], I'm still here.

WN: Can you compare your life here in Waipahu, when you first came, to how it was in Madeira? Which one was better, when you came here as a child?

MN: Well, when I left there, I was a kid, eight-and-a-half years old, eh. I don't know. I don't think I can compare because the life there for a kid, for us kids, everything we did was [*to*] accomplish something. Not to waste, we don't waste too much time in the farms. You gotta do something every day. You don't think you're working, but that's your job, see. Like instead of going to school, you're doing that. Like at home, you do the dishes every morning. My kids, I used to, “You do the dishes. You do this.” All that stuff. But back in—we never did go to school, except we used to wait for holidays or go to church with my mother. There was no movies or anything. But I felt I was

happy kid all my life there. I never got sick. I don't remember getting sick. I remember an incident that happened there. We had a kitchen outside. The roof was made out of—what the hell they call that—out of straw. Wasn't tile. The main house was on the other side, tile. Floor, everything, cement. Nice house. But the kitchen was dirt floor. Walk from there, that's where we eat and everything. One day, my sister and I were playing and my sister Jokina, she was two years older than me. We set fire to that thing, got fire on the straw roof, eh. And then, I came out, call my mother. Lucky had people, they were harvesting something over there. They came over there and got that thing under control. Then they put new straw roof. But when they came, I ran in the main house. My sister and I went under the bed, hide (laughs). I remember that. I must have been five, six years old. My sister was older. She got all the blame for it afterwards. They looked for us. My mother pulled us from under that. She pulled my leg first, was sticking out (chuckles). She look at me, "Who start the fire?"

"Oh, I don't know."

My sister, "I don't know. I don't know."

We didn't blame one another, "We don't know. We don't know," but you know was us.

She used to tell me, she was older, "You tell Mama," gonna beat me up, eh. But we didn't tell her.

Anyway, we were both to blame. We didn't get a whipping, but we went one day without supper. Just eat little bit, "That's enough!" We go to bed kind of, not hungry but you wish you had eaten some more. That's the punishment. "Eh, you had four potatoes, that's all. You can't make number five and number six." We used to eat a lot of sweet potatoes. That's the only incident I remember when I was a kid. The [*only*] trouble I ever made. Set fire to the kitchen roof.

WN: So you had straw roof?

MN: Straw roof.

WN: And the walls were wood?

MN: No, the walls were stone.

WN: Stone. Oh.

MN: The houses there, all stone. And then cement, eh. But the main house had tile. Good houses there, they put tile. The house we lived in, mostly tile, but they always have the shacks outside, kitchen. They don't put tile, they put straw, wheat. We had a lot of wheat, tie 'em up. But when we came to

Hawai`i, they had rice over here. The Chinese raised rice over here. They had that straw. One year, my mother got—we didn't have cotton beds, so I went down there and get straw, put the straw in the beds over here. First two years, the thing soft, eh. After, the thing come lumpy, comes flat. And the first ones we bought, everything was iron [*frame*] beds. You didn't want to buy anything wood, the termites get 'em, before. That's the way it was. The living was, here in Hawai`i was easy living. But I was too young to---play, I don't remember playing.

WN: Even---what about here? When you came here, did you play?

MN: No, over here, we had time to play, but I always had chores to do.

WN: What kind of chores did you do here?

MN: For instance, we raised pigs. Then [*when*] we had a wooden stove, I used to carry the wood. Then I became like treasurer for my dad. I could read, write everything. I take care of the groceries. I used to go get my dad's pay on payday. He made me number one in the house, boy. I could read and write pretty good, and add and subtract. So I used to take care all the business. Afterwards, I took care of the bank and everything. *Bumbai*, they started an electric company in Maui. And somehow they sold shares to my dad. I must have been thirteen, fourteen years old, just little before I went to work. So he bought the shares. New company, Maui Electric [*Company*]. Lot of Portuguese bought and he invested \$400. And I saw the guys came, they gave nice talk, Portuguese. "You know, this new electric thing in Maui and all, you gotta get shares now, if you want to get this or that."

So my dad told me, "What do you think?"

I was young. I was in school yet. Oh, I no more nothing to say to him. I don't know about those things. He bought \$400 worth of shares. Then the thing went on for years and years. I went to work. I was working, then they went bankrupt. Didn't even get that goddamn thing started in Maui, Maui Electric. You know, he lost all the money. Afterwards, I went down, the company and, "Sorry, that was an investment," this and that. I knew more or less that by that time. From that time on, he wouldn't spend one penny without me. So I took over his bank book, everything.

WN: What kind of job did your father do when you first came here?

MN: Labor. Ditches. He used to make the [*irrigation*] ditches, with stone. He was good on the—put stone around that, they get the wooden gate. And from there, he did a couple of years, and he became bricklayer helper. He was good with the stone. He could get the stone where to fit and all that. You see all these walls on Waipahu Street? Portuguese put that up. They fit the stone.

WN: I see.



MN: And some Japanese, but the Portuguese were good with that. But anyway, afterwards I took care the bank. But he had a hard time to get money out of the bank. He couldn't write, he had to make a cross, see. So I used to take him down the bank and the teller, "Tell your dad put a cross."

I told the banker, "Look, how about my dad wants me to take care of this thing, this book and all, his money and all that. How about I make the cross?"

(Chuckles) He look at me. He asked my dad if it's all right. And my dad told me, "What did he say?" My dad never did learn English. "What did he say?"

And then I told him what.

"This my boy, oh, okay, okay."

(Laughter)

MN: So he made a---I told him make a cross. He make a cross, but he's kind of tremble, you know. So I kind of copy one as close as that. The guy look, "Okay, Nobriga, that's good enough."

(Laughter)

WN: But you knew how to write your name though?

MN: Yeah. He used to make a cross with me, and then I sign his name and I get his money. But he had to make that cross. But after I told him I'm going to take the whole thing over, in his name, but to draw money, I had to make the cross and sign his name. So from that time on, I took care the whole thing. I make a cross for him, same.

WN: So you learned math and English, like that, all at school, Waipahu School?

MN: Yeah, I learned all Waipahu School. But after I left school, I took up steam engineering. Those days, steam was the thing, eh. I took ICS [*International Correspondence School*] course, steam engineering. I figure, well, someday I'm gonna become engineer, one step up from machinist. I didn't want to be shop foreman. The heck with it, I want something else, you know. I wanted something where I didn't have to stay behind the lathe. I was getting where, the heck with it. I wanted to see how it feels to be a boss (chuckles).

WN: Getting back to the chores, you know, you said also that you helped your mother with the oven, the Portuguese oven. What was your job for that?

MN: Oh, I used to chop the wood. I chopped all the wood for the oven. You see, you gotta put all the wood in the oven and heat up the oven. You know what I mean? You gotta heat up the oven with wood. Had a big opening. Take the

cover off, put the wood in there, and it start going. And she'd come over there and look. She knew when the heat was on. Afterwards, she figured that the oven was ready to put the bread in. She rake all the stuff up, all the coals, eh. She had a big mop like, she mop all the ashes out, as much as possible. The bread is ready to go. She get the bread together, big thing like this, with shovel. You put the loaf of bread there, put 'em way in the oven, eh. Pile 'em all up in there. And you put the cover on. Not closed, but you leave 'em so vent can come in. You put 'em closed, you burn the bread. So she put that thing, leave so much. Then once in a while, she go over there look, put the cover little closer, little closer, then she let it go. And sometimes she told me, "You watch the clock."

I used to watch. She had one of these clocks where wake you up with two bells, clang, clang, you know, the old clock, alarm clock. (Chuckles) Then I used to tell her, "Eh, time!"

She go over there. I take the big basket. And we had a shovel. They made one at the plantation.

WN: Made of what, wood?

MN: Iron shovel. Thin one, like a platter, you know, with a long iron. It go under the bread. The bread all solid already. Take about---some of them, the charcoal is sticky, just take the coal out. But that was some bread!

WN: (Laughs) I bet.

MN: I'm telling you! In fact, we used to sell 'em. I had a friend that I used to sell the bread [*to*]. I never gave 'em because my mother said, "We can't give the bread, because that's something we don't do. But he buy what the bread is worth." We used to sell one big loaf for a dollar. A dollar was worth a lot of money.

WN: That's a lot of money. That's expensive.

MN: Yeah. But the guy, this Japanese guy, Yasui's father, Johnny Yasui's father. He used to buy. And [*another*] guy, he died last week. He's my age. We went to school together. He used to buy. They had a little store up in Japanese Camp. I think he used to take care of the hot house. The old man lost his arm, eh, he used to take care of the—the old man used to love that bread. He used to say, "Five dollar, ten dollar, no, I like." One dollar. We never sell bread to anybody but to him. One dollar.

WN: One dollar, that's . . .

MN: Boy, they used to---but the bread was worth about three loaves at least. Big loaf. Today, what, one of these [small] loafs, one dollar.

WN: (Chuckles) More than that.

MN: Not even worth one-half of that. But one dollar was one day's work.

WN: One day's work, right.

MN: My dad was one dollar [*a day*]. I worked in the plantation vacation [*i.e., summer*]time for two-and-a-half cents an hour. That's a fact. Vacation time. Twenty-five cents a day. But the twenty-five cents was worth a lot of money. I used to pay for food and everything. I used to wonder after I grew up, how the hell could that twenty-five cents pay for all that stuff. But the twenty-five cents and so on was it.

WN: Getting back to the oven, you know, was that a community oven?

MN: Yeah, the oven was built in our house. There was four people besides us take care the oven. The Spaniards used to bake their bread different. They used to bake their bread—I don't know. They never had an oven. They used to bake their bread, hard bread. You gotta cut 'em. Not fluffy. The Spaniard bread was different. Since we lived in Spanish Camp, they had one, two, three other neighbors, Portuguese, living around. They came in with the oven. Everyone get certain day. I had to schedule them when you can bake and this and that.

WN: Oh, you scheduled the . . .

MN: I scheduled that.

WN: . . . families?

MN: By that time. I scheduled. Oh, after my second year [*of school*], I could read and everything. You know, the common stuff. Schedule, I knew already. I could add, subtract, if I forgot something, I look in the book, you know, already. I thought I was a hell of a smart guy. I don't have to remember anything. (Chuckles) That's a fact. Before, if you don't remember, you lost.

WN: Were there times when two families wanted to use the oven at the same time?

MN: No, they had the dates. My mother used to pick a date. She always had a Monday or Tuesday. But anyway, if they changed the dates, they come and see me. Sometimes they couldn't make it, they change with one another, you know. But if she couldn't make on that date, they were very honest people, you know. They come around, eh. And see my mother.

But I'd like to talk about going to school. When I first went to school, we had no electricity. We study, we do everything under the kerosene light. That was rough. But when the electricity came on, I already could read and write. I could go to any place, sign my name. I could read a lot already and all that.

And when electricity came on, was one cord, that light over there, the switch, you know. Boy, everybody was really---“Eh, I got electricity. Eh, my house, I buy it first,” this and that. They brag, you know, the people. The women, you know.

Waipahu Street had the lights first. So we had lights. We very happy with the lights. Was plantation light, not from Hawaiian Electric [*Company*]. Plantation furnished. They had one dynamo over there in the mill. They got a little bigger dynamo there only for the plantation people. Up in the Japanese Camp, they didn't have lights too early, they had it later.

WN: Spanish Camp was one of the earlier camps that had lights?

MN: We lived Waipahu Street, Waipahu Street got the lights first.

WN: Oh, your first house, you had lights?

MN: The first house, we didn't have lights.

WN: The first house, when you came here.

MN: No lights. When we moved to the Spanish Camp, we were there couple years before we had lights. One year or two. Because I remember when we got there, I used to study under the kerosene lamp. My sister and I, one of my sisters went to school with me. The other one was housemaid here for somebody down the street here. And my two oldest brothers worked. Three of us went to school.

WN: Where was the school?

MN: Waipahu Elementary, Waipahu Street.

WN: Oh, same place where it's now?

MN: Same place where it's now.

WN: You didn't have August Ahrens [*Elementary School*] back then?

MN: No August Ahrens. August Ahrens came in---August Ahrens was the [*name of*] first manager of O`ahu Sugar Company. My kids went to August Ahrens. And then they went to—from August Ahrens they went to Waipahu [*High School*].

WN: Right.

MN: Clarence Dyson was my schoolmate. He became the first principal over there, Clarence Dyson. And him and I were good friends in school. And every time when we had history, geography or something, I really, really liked it. I was always there with the top. And nine times out of ten, I was always better

than him. And he used to get a report taken home to his mother, and his mother used to really tell him off.

(Laughter)

MN: Clarence. I was friendly with them. I used to go by, go to school, go by pick up Alice, his sister and him, to Waipahu Street, down the old river place, Waipahu School, the old Waipahu School. We went school together.

WN: Did your parents stress education on you?

MN: My parents?

WN: Yeah.

MN: No. After I got through over there, I supposed to go McKinley [*High School*] or St. Louis [*College*], I was fifteen years old, eh. I [*first*] went to school when I was nine almost, and I quit when I was fifteen, eighth grade. I pick up fast, eh. Then I went to work [*in 1913*]. I went to work in the [*sugar*] mill, oiler. There was no such thing as child labor law. You big enough, you can work, you work. I was bigger than lot of those guys anyway. I went to work O`ahu Sugar Company that time [*1913*].

WN: Before we get into your work, I want to ask you just couple more questions. You were telling me about your house in Spanish Camp was the first to have indoor toilet?

MN: Well, yeah. This was years afterwards. Living in the ballpark [*i.e., Manuel Nobriga and family lived in a house at Hans L'Orange Field in the 1930s and 1940s*], I had a toilet and bath outside, shower in the back, one little house. So I asked the boss to get me a toilet and bath in the house, but the house was too small. And by that time, I was doing a lot of stuff for the company, sports and all that, so I asked L'Orange, and he said, "You don't have it there, the ballpark, you kids gotta go outside at night?"

"Yeah."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?"

I said, "Maybe I'm not entitled to it."

"You're not entitled to? Of course you're entitled to."

"But I have to build the room."

"Never mind. You leave it to me."

So he went over there and built two rooms. One more bedroom and toilet

and bath.

WN: Oh, this is not Spanish Camp, this is the . . .

MN: No, that was the ballpark. Then when I got that, this Bill Cormack, he and I are good friends, the guy take care all the housing. I told him, "You know something, my dad and my mother, they have to go out in the night if they have to use the bathroom, or they get a bedpan and do that, but they old and I live comfortable, my kids and all that. I wish that my dad had one." And I said, "I hate to go see the boss."

This Bill Cormack was friend of mine, he was a carpenter, he said, "I take care of that, Nobriga. Just don't tell anybody."

He [*father*] had two extra rooms there. Cormack said, "If he has an extra room there, all I gotta do is move in the toilet and put in the piping." He had a toilet outside, you know, where when the hole fill up, just move 'em [*i.e., the outhouse*] away, make another hole, move the outhouse, then cover the [*old*] hole. Anyway, he [*Cormack*] finally went there and he put the toilet for my dad.

I told my mother, oh, she was very happy. Okay, then my dad, one day, I went there, after everything was done, he told me, "Eh, I never had a toilet in the house. I can't use this."

I told him, "Why?"

"Oh, I'm not used to that kind of stuff. You don't take that toilet away, that small toilet, don't take it away from there."

I told him, "Eh, wait a minute, Dad, when the hole fill up, what?"

"No, no, no, no. Only me going there now. Take long time [*to fill up*]. Don't take it away." He didn't want me to take that [*out*]house away.

I said, "I thought you saw the boss. I'm going to get into trouble."

"Oh, you don't have to tell him. Leave 'em alone."

So, I went to see Cormack. I told him, "You know what happened, Cormack? Now my dad don't want to use the toilet in the house. I wish to hell if you don't mind going over there, take that toilet [*i.e., outhouse*] away from there and cover up the hole."

He did. (Chuckles) My dad had to learn how to go there now, or else he had to use the chamber. He finally had to---oh, he got kind of a little sore at me. I used to go there, I used to tell him in Portuguese, "Eh, Pop, you mad with me? I know you mad with me, Pop, you never talk to me today."

He walk away, he shake his head. Afterward, he come around and laugh, you know. But Cormack say, "What the hell. I went all out for you." The next day, he took that damn thing away, Bill Cormack.

WN: You know when you came over here from Madeira, you know, you said you waited for holidays and things. Did you celebrate the same things over here that you did in Madeira?

MN: Oh, the Christmas, yeah. The Catholic holidays was the same. Only when we used to go to church, the church was different. Portugal they didn't have seats when we were there. I guess they have today. Didn't have seats in the church, but over here they did. They had nice benches where they could just sit down, you know. But the church over here was divided in half. One side for women, one side for men, the Catholic church. You went in, you sat on the men's section. But the women's section, women and children. Children could go on the men's section too. Little girls didn't want to go in the men's section. They go to the other side. That's the way it was. And then, the women's section was always full. The men hardly go to church (chuckles). I used to argue with them, I said, "Why the men don't go to church?"

"Well, men don't need it. Why you guys go there and worship? One man, Jesus Christ. So we are part of Jesus Christ. You women are the sinners." You know, just kid 'em.

But anyway, funny that thing used to get filled up, filled up, filled up. Finally they start saying, "Well, the two front sections, going to give to the women." So the men get few sections left. Then the third section, fourth section. First thing you know, the women took over and go sit anyplace. That's it. The priest couldn't control 'em. "Oh, I cannot start the mass until you sit in the right place." The women didn't move.

(Laughter)

MN: No way. They didn't move. Then I start thinking, Father, you may be a priest, but you don't know women. That's why the priest don't get married, Catholic priests.

(Laughter)

MN: And the women never go to church without a hat. Everybody had to have a hat. That's part of their . . .

WN: In Madeira and here?

MN: And here. But there was a neckerchief. My mother used to use that here for—she never did buy a hat. She always wore that thing over.

WN: She wore a scarf over her head?

MN: Right over and tie over here, go down.

WN: And tie at the chin.

MN: They cover their hair.

WN: But here [*Hawai`i*], what?

MN: Over here was hats. Some with all the old hats, you know. Yeah. Everybody used to grow their hair long. When I got married, my wife had nice long hair, and beautiful. The doctor used to admire the hair, they see that. They used to tell me, "Yeah, Lucy has nice hair."

"Yeah. I didn't marry her for her hair, you know."

They say, "I know, I know."

(Laughter)

WN: What about, now, Christmas? Was Christmas different?

MN: No, Christmas was a real celebration. Christmas they had a, they call that *lapinha* [*nativity scene*], they put the fruit, everything over there. My daughter in Mililani, makes *lapinha* yet. Only she don't make it exactly like the Portuguese. They put wheat in the cup and they grow it before Christmas come around. Then they put fruit. They had the infant Jesus in a little box, you know, glass case. And then you decorate the whole thing, see. Apples, oranges, everything. But they have steps like, you know. They make it altar like. And put Jesus way on the top. And when we were kind of grown up already, I used to kid my mother, I told her, "Jesus get a little apron [*around the waist*], you know, little statue." Had a little apron. I used to say, "How we know if that's Jesus, we didn't see anything?"

(Laughter)

MN: So she opened the little apron and we all start screaming, "Oh, yeah, yeah, we believe."

So she said, "Not supposed to show you guys, but you guys been bugging me so much, okay." She show. "Now, you guys saw already?" She put 'em down quick.

(Laughter)

MN: After the holidays and all, she take 'em and put 'em, she had a little box, glass case, with a window and everything, beautiful. Jesus was always there,



the whole year round, infant Jesus. In Portugal, had a crown, red clothes and all the gold, you know. Oh, about eight, nine inches tall, the whole thing. We were good Catholics.

WN: Did the plantation do anything for Christmas for the community?

MN: Plantation, no. I don't remember that. I don't think so. We had holidays. Everything was for the church. The plantation used to support the church so much every month, I think.

WN: But your social life was centered around the church, then, yeah?

MN: You see, we started a St. Joseph's Society here, and I started that. And then too much trouble with the Portuguese, I gave up. They folded up. I start saying, what the heck, I'm doing all this for nothing. I mean, little girls dress up like angels and all that, one of my kids went in that and they had problem, eh. I pushed my kids out. Bang. But they go to Catholic church today, not like before. They had a communion rail. They had a long rail and you go communion, you kneel down, they give you communion. The priest give communion one by one. Now, they don't do that. They had a communion rail, there's no communion rail anymore. Today, they have people helping. Everybody give communion. They have assistants, eh. They call 'em—some of them are made deacons. They wanted to make a deacon out of me one time, I said, "I'm a machinist, leave me alone."

(Laughter)

WN: Let me change tapes.

WN: What about food? Did you eat different foods when you came here?

MN: No, same thing. Almost the same. Only we start learning how to drink coffee. When the war came on, then was coffee, but before that was tea.

WN: You mean World War I?

MN: [*World War II.*] Tea or chocolate. My kids went to school, all tea or chocolate. All my kids. When the war came on, they get boyfriend, or what, got married, coffee, coffee, coffee. They start learning coffee, I drink coffee too now. But once in a while, I make tea.

WN: What about some of the foods, like could you get sweet potato here? The same kind of sweet potato that you ate . . .

MN: They had irrigation camps all over the place, and they had so much land for the guys to plant potato and everything. You could buy a bag of potatoes for two bucks, dollar and a half, whole bag, about fifty pounds. Sweet potatoes. Yeah. Those guys work out there in the camp, they used to raise that. So

when they start the irrigation different way, all the guys lost their job.

WN: You folks have a garden? Did you have a garden?

MN: In fact, when I lived in the ballpark, I had a chicken coop, out of the floor, raised chicken coop. When the chicken lay an egg, she never see that egg. It roll down in a trough. Where she lay the egg, get a little flap like that, roll down in the trough. Had a little window there, and it come out. And my wife used to say, "That's cruel. The chicken don't even see their own egg."

I said, "You don't want to eat that egg, I'll eat it."

(Laughter)

MN: I had chicken coop there. Then they start cutting all that out for health [*i.e., sanitation*]. But you had to have that chicken coop out of the ground, that's my time. The chickens . . .

WN: It had to be elevated.

MN: Elevated, yeah. All the chickens in there. They didn't want to raise 'em on the ground, so I tried that for hobby, and I raised ducks. They told me, "Get rid of your ducks."

WN: How come?

MN: They used to go out of the fence, go out to the ballpark. The guy say, "Hey, your ducks going over there, Nobriga."

"What duck?"

"Yes, your duck (laughs)."

Afterwards, I gave all that up. When the war [*i.e., World War II*] came on, everything changed. Kids go out one by one, all got married.

WN: When the war started, you were only—you were about nineteen years old, eh? [*WN is referring to World War I.*] When the war started, you were about nineteen years old. Did you have to go in the war [*i.e., World War I*]? Did you get drafted?

MN: No, the war started—when the war started over here was—well, I forgot the date but.

WN: Nineteen seventeen.

MN: The first one, I was in Maui.

WN: You were on Maui, oh, right.

MN: I was in Maui in 1917. I came back from Maui in nineteen—something like 1920.

WN: You didn't get drafted or anything?

MN: While I was there in Maui, some of the guys were coming back already. The war was getting over. But when I was there, they were taking draftees. I never did even register.

WN: Okay, you know what, we're going to stop here. It's been about almost two hours, so I'll stop here and we can continue some other time.

MN: Oh yeah.

WN: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW